

# High-Structured CoParenting Communication Guide

WAYS TO REDUCE CONFLICT AND REMAIN CHILD-FOCUSED

In high-conflict co-parenting situations, communication should be clear, respectful, brief, and focused on the needs of the child. This handout provides tools and boundaries to help reduce conflict and keep communication manageable and purposeful.

Your child benefits most when conflict stays low and communication stays calm. You don't have to win the conversation—you just need to protect peace and clarity for your child's sake.

## Core Principles of Communication

### 1. Keep it simple and kind.

- Don't argue or defend.
- Avoid sarcasm, threats, or emotional language.
- Example: "Jamie has a dentist appointment on Thursday at 3:00 PM. Please confirm pick-up."

### 2. Child-Focused

- Every message should support the best interests of your child.
- Ask yourself: "Is this about the child, or is this about me?"

### 3. Business-Like Tone

- Think of your communication like a professional email.
- Use neutral language, no matter what tone the other person uses.

### 4. Limit Emotional Reactivity

- Don't respond right away if you feel triggered. Wait, reflect, and edit.
- Use a third-party tool (like Our Family Wizard) to help filter tone and content.

## My Communication Goals

**My top 3 communication goals with my co-parent are:**

1. I want to reduce \_\_\_\_\_
2. I want to improve \_\_\_\_\_
3. I want to protect my child from \_\_\_\_\_

## Boundaries that help

### What To Do:

- ✓ Use written communication (email or co-parenting app).
- ✓ Stick to logistics: schedules, medical needs, school issues.
- ✓ Respond within 24–48 hours unless urgent.
- ✓ Use "I statements" and avoid blame.
- ✓ Document communication for accountability.

### What to Avoid:

- ✗ Venting or emotionally charged language.
- ✗ Rehashing old arguments.
- ✗ Using your child as a messenger.
- ✗ Making assumptions or accusations.
- ✗ Threatening to involve the Court or professionals in every message.

## Sample Communication Template

Subject: [Topic: e.g., Schedule for Fall Activities]

Hi [Co-parent's name],

I'm writing to coordinate [insert child's name]'s fall schedule. They are interested in joining [activity]. Practices are Tuesdays at 4:30 PM.

Please let me know if this works with your time.

Thank you,  
[Your Name]

GFG

GUYETTE  
FAMILY GUIDANCE  
PLLC



## Examples of Clear Communication

### Poor:

"You never show up on time, and it's not fair to the kids."

### Better:

"Drop-off was scheduled for 3:00 PM today. Please confirm future timing so the kids have a consistent routine."

### Poor:

"I heard you're dating someone again. Just what our kids need."

### Better:

"Please let me know who will be present during the children's visit this weekend, in line with our agreement."

## Scripts for High-Conflict Moments

When I receive a hostile message, I will say:

"\_\_\_\_\_"

e.g., "I will only respond to messages about [child's name]'s needs."

When I feel myself getting emotional, I will remind myself:

"\_\_\_\_\_"

e.g., "My job is to stay calm for my child."

## What I Will Do Differently Moving Forward

Five habits I will practice to keep communication focused and respectful:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Five things I know trigger me:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## My Boundaries for Healthy Co-Parenting

These are the boundaries I need to set for myself:

- I will only respond to messages within \_\_\_\_ hours (unless urgent).
- I will check messages at the following times-  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I will keep my responses under \_\_\_\_ sentences.
- I will take at least \_\_\_\_ minutes before replying if I feel triggered.
- I will communicate only through:
  - ☐ Our Family Wizard
  - ☐ Talking Parents
  - ☐ Email
  - ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- I will not respond to:
  - ☐ Personal attacks
  - ☐ Past grievances
  - ☐ Anything unrelated to the child
  - ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Topics We Should Limit Communication to:

List shared parenting topics you do need to communicate about:

- ☐ Schedules
- ☐ Medical care
- ☐ items kids need
- ☐ School or education
- ☐ Emergencies
- ☐ Exchanges
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Filter Before You Send" Checklist

A list to help the parent self-monitor before hitting send:

Before I send this message, have I:

- ☐ Removed all sarcasm or judgment?
- ☐ Stuck to just one topic?
- ☐ Kept it focused on the child?
- ☐ Removed unnecessary emotion?
- ☐ Thought about how this could look in court?
- ☐ Waited to cool down if upset?